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ABSTRACT

The quality of education in small colleges is considered, and Brunswick Foundation's Small College Program is described. After an overview concerning problems of small colleges (those with enrollments of 2,000 and less), attention is directed to the Small College Program, which provides grants to reward colleges undertaking exceptional action programs. The Foundation's surveys of small colleges to determine their major concerns are described, and examples of typical survey questions and responses are provided. Views of the Foundation on quality in higher education, techniques for judging or measuring quality, and who should assess quality are explained. Additionally, small colleges' responses to the Foundations's quality of education surveys are examined, based on a university team's analysis of survey results. Schools' definitions of quality are identified as follows: the qualities of the persons graduated by the college, the educational process, and a specialty focus (academic program or a group of learners with special needs). The schools' orientations are also considered: traditional liberal arts, both liberal arts and career education, or only career preparation. Additional topics include alumni outcomes, faculty development, and support services basic to educational quality. (SW)

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QUALITY OF EDUCATION

IN SMALL COLLEGES

COLLEGES OF PRIDE, DETERMINATION AND OPTIMISM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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THE BRUNSWICK FOUNDATION, INC.

Quality of Education
in
Small Colleges

Colleges of Pride, Determination and Optimism

A Study Of
The Brunswick Foundation's
Small College Program

The Brunswick Foundation
One Brunswick Plaza
Skokie, Illinois 60077

January 1983

OVERVIEW

This is the second in a series of booklets that has been prepared as feedback to colleges that have participated in the Brunswick Foundation's Small College Program.

For many years the Brunswick Foundation has sponsored a Small College Program enabling any college with enrollments of 2,000 or less to compete for unrestricted grants. After surveying the needs of the small independent colleges each year, the Foundation develops a series of questions based on these needs and invites the colleges to respond with their action plans that would enable them to maintain or strengthen the quality of education on their respective campuses. Those that demonstrate excellent performance in these specific areas are awarded the grants.

Many college presidents, their development officers, and other administrators had regularly requested that the Foundation provide illustrative action plans that are being performed in the Small Colleges of America and that were submitted to the Foundation in response to the issues raised. Even though the Foundation normally attempts to provide its funds directly for the colleges or causes in question and has been reluctant to allocate its resources for publishing academic treatises, it did decide to respond to the college requests.

At the end of 1982, the Foundation had a pilot study made on two questions previously asked in the areas of Student Recruitment and Retention, developed a brochure and distributed it to all colleges that participated in its Small College Program. This brochure on the Quality of Education is a second effort.

In each instance, the Foundation selected a sampling of action plans submitted by the various colleges in the areas to be studied (Recruitment, Retention, and Quality); no attempt was made to capture each and every item submitted by a college. It then had a university team make an analysis of the data to determine the trends and representative activities, programs, procedures, and techniques being performed by the Small Colleges of America. Their results are found within this report.

The Foundation is indebted to Professor Robert J. Menges of Northwestern University's Center for the Teaching Professions for serving as coordinator of this study and to Virginia Wenk who headed the team consisting of herself, Jovita Ross and Lovel Greene (all at the University Center for the Teaching Professions) who worked laboriously and in a tight time frame to finalize this study. Of course, without the continued encouragement and support year after year of the Brunswick Foundation Contributions Committee comprised of William L. Niemann, Robert C. Anderegg, Raymond E. Hartstein, Kenneth A. Marshall, Max E. McGrath, Jack F. Meyerhoff, Milton Rudo, and James F. Urbanek, this Small College Program could not have succeeded as it has.

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THE BRUNSWICK FOUNDATION'S SMALL COLLEGE PROGRAM

(This section conveys background on how the Small College Program came into being and how it is now operating)

The Brunswick Foundation has a lengthy and continuing interest in higher education and has been especially sensitive to the challenges facing many small independent U.S. colleges. Being its number one priority, the Foundation annually allocates over 50% of its contributions to higher education.

Problems of Small Colleges

During the early 1970's there were some indicators that began to spell trouble for higher education, and particularly the "small privates." Demographers were predicting a reduction in eighteen year olds and both elementary and high schools were either closing or planning to close in a few years. By the mid-seventies many small colleges were beginning to encounter difficulties as a result of the environment of inflation, limited resources, declining enrollments, and critical competition.

This period, which was marked by shrinking enrollments along with steady inflation, started to test both institutions and individuals. The testing was more severe for smaller institutions than larger ones because the shrunken enrollments and higher costs pressed against a slimmer bulwark of reserves. 34% of America's private colleges were losing ground financially and were eating up their reserves. For some schools the crunch was fatal.

From 1970 to the mid-seventies it was estimated that 49 small private four year colleges in the United States closed, and an additional 29 schools either merged with other colleges or shifted to public control. In the period that followed, as enrollments dropped, costs had risen, and funds became more limited, it was said that more than 300 small private colleges may be vulnerable to closure.

Thus, the Foundation felt that if reasonable policies and actions were not adopted, then the problems of the next 15 years would not only result in the elimination of marginal small institutions (that we may get along without), but would also cause the closing of many more small colleges that give American higher education the important elements of quality and diversity.

Studies Made To Determine If Small College Needs Were Being Met

Realizing the predicament the small colleges found themselves in, the Brunswick Foundation set out to investigate what other corporations and foundations were doing for small colleges, examine its own educational programs with focus on the small independent schools, and then set out to provide some aid and encourage others to do likewise.

In "checking out" other corporations and foundations it was apparent that minimal efforts were being expended on behalf of these needy institutions. Some tagged their contributions for special projects or research, or for what they considered to be quality colleges that in their opinions were making contributions to society. Others leaned in the direction of providing funds to their favorite college because several members of the company were alumni, one or more of its members served on the college board, the college was in a plant community providing services to its employees, the college was one with which the company built a special relationship for recruiting or other purposes, or the college was a prestigious one with which they would like to be affiliated.

In a review of the Brunswick Foundation's educational contributions, it was noted that they were not too far afield from those of other corporations and foundations. Since its inception it made a number of direct grants, but in addition supported graduate research fellowships. It also supported financial assistance programs for colleges that provided new graduates as employees or assisted in educating its employees. Scholarships were awarded to the handicapped, graduating high school seniors, and college undergraduates. In addition, it provided support for a variety of higher education associations. Small colleges did receive funds from the Brunswick Foundation in the form of direct grants, contributions through the Educational Matching Gift Program, or through one of the many state associations of independent colleges.

The Brunswick Foundation's Answers To Meeting The Plight Of The Small Colleges

State Associations of Independent Colleges

The Foundation, anxious to assist the small colleges, made its first new effort in 1975 with its state association contributions. Even though it had long been supporting these state associations, it felt that all states where there was a major presence of Brunswick employees should receive a contribution, and the amount should be more equitable in proportion to the number of employees in that state. The Foundation then developed a table that met these specifications and as a result new states were added for contributions, and the amounts for each state were readjusted. Each year the populations of Brunswick's employees are recalculated and the amounts for each state are readjusted.

Educational Matching Gift Program Improved

A second plug came for the small college when the Educational Matching Gift Program was improved to enable the Foundation to match on a two to one basis any donation of an employee or director. Many small colleges throughout the U.S. benefited with immediate increased contributions.

A Small College Program Using Conventional Criteria

It was not until 1976, however, that the Brunswick Foundation embarked on its full-fledged Small College Program. In this program it used traditional quality criteria for the selection of colleges to receive grants; such as, the test scores for entrance, the ratio of faculty to students, the drop-out rate between freshmen and senior years, the number of students going on to graduate school, and the number of Ph.D.'s on the faculty. This format continued through 1978.

The Present Small College Program

Newly Devised Criteria Established

The Foundation was not satisfied with this criteria for it was not convinced that these items necessarily contribute to excellence. For example, there is no relationship between having a Ph.D. and being a good teacher. The Foundation felt that it was essential to seek out those small colleges who are approaching the environment of the 1980's on a sound basis, maintaining and enhancing their quest for academic excellence while also planning for and dealing with growth and financial issues. Most people are aware of the small colleges with long established reputations for quality of learning; however, the Brunswick Foundation was interested in identifying some of the relatively unknown colleges that are continuing to pursue excellence. Therefore, it decided to look for standards of excellence in terms of demonstrable progress that a college is making to maintain its areas of quality and improve its areas of weakness. The Foundation felt that:

- those colleges that are demonstrating outstanding performances by specific action programs should be merited;
- small colleges should be encouraged to improve the effectiveness of their leadership and initiate and implement action programs to build and strengthen their respective colleges in a climate where survival is so essential;
- colleges should not be awarded grants on the basis of need alone, nor should the Foundation make or meet "challenge grants" that are becoming quite common; and,
- it should invite small colleges to participate rather than the Foundation reacting to proposals or making its own selections on conventional criteria.

Objective

The objective of the Small College Program was to seek out, encourage, recognize and reward those schools that are demonstrating performance excellence through implementation of action programs for the 1980's

How the Process Works

1. Small colleges are contacted to determine their most pressing needs. Typical areas of concern are:

   - Declining enrollments
   - Limited resources
   - Inflation
   - Critical competition
   - Quality of education
   - Innovation
   - Reduction of financial aid
   - Deterioration of physical facilities

2. A questionnaire of four or five questions per year is developed and is aimed at some of the prime concerns of the small colleges. An application form and description of the program are also prepared.

a. Typical questions that were developed and appeared in past Foundation questionnaires to meet the concerns are as follows:

Enrollment

1. What are you doing to attract and retain students?

2. In what ways is the college improving its marketing efforts to affect enrollment?

Finance

1. What is the college doing to maintain financial stability or cause a turnaround of its financial position?

2. What are you, as President, doing to improve college operations, offset inflation, and run your college efficiently in the present economic environment?

Quality of Education

1. How do you define quality of education?

2. What are you doing to maintain or improve the quality of education at your institution?

Facilities

1. What has your college done to prevent necessary maintenance projects from being deferred and thus avoid deterioration and/or obsolescence of your physical facilities?

b. Realizing that many small colleges do not have elaborate development departments, the questionnaire is made simple enough to be completed in short order.

c. Efforts are made to enable the lesser known college who has limited resources and staff for proposal writing to be able to compete with the more prestigious college.

d. The fact that colleges are bombarded with paperwork by government departments from which funds are requested, efforts are made to keep the process easy for submission by the colleges.

3. The questionnaire, program description and application form is sent to the college president of each small college whose enrollment is 2,000 or under.

a. The Brunswick Foundation takes the initiative and sends the data to the colleges inviting each to participate.

4. The questionnaire and applications are to be completed and forwarded to the Brunswick Foundation by a specific date each year.

a. The data is developed by the President of the college, the development officer, or a designee of each of these.

b. It is hoped that by having to write out what they are doing to improve their quality and strengthen their college, it will cause each to:

- do a self analysis of their schools on every aspect called for in the questionnaire that may be contributing to quality;
- re-examine and redefine other aspects of their college (as, mission, programs, staff, etc.);
- redirect their efforts and get them to do things to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" or accelerate efforts already "on the drawing board;"
- look at their competition to see if they are keeping up; and,
- consider implementation of new and/or innovative programs they may not have thought of before.

5. A team of university educators and businessmen assist the Brunswick Foundation in reading and evaluating the data submitted by the colleges and selecting the winners of the grants.

a. Criteria is established for each of the questions to be evaluated.

b. The evaluation team reads each college submission against the established criteria.

c. A college must receive consistent "high marks" on responses to <u>all</u> of the questions to be a winner.

6. The ten winning colleges receive an unrestricted grant of $3,000 each.

a. Five awards are given to colleges with enrollments of 1,000 and under; five awards are given to those with enrollments of 1,001 to 2,000.

b. The checks are delivered personally, where possible, by the Foundation to the college campuses for presentation to the President and/or Board members.

7. Publicity is set forth in media including philanthropic journals, national education press, college news media and local press.

8. Sampling of the data submitted (not only of the winners, but by all colleges) may be compiled into a brochure and/or presented at a seminar to enable all to profit by the things that are being done in the small colleges today.

a. Brochures will be sent to all college presidents whose colleges participate.

Comments of College Presidents

Typical Comments of Winners

The winners of the awards were quite proud of their being selected. A few of the recipients are quoted, in part, with the following comments:

- "We do indeed take pride in being selected by the Brunswick Foundation and take heart that you and your colleagues saw fit to recognize our place among the first flight of small colleges in the country."

- "What you are doing for private higher education is very gratifying to us, and we will do all we can to measure up to your expectations."

- "We find the vote of confidence which you and the Brunswick Foundation have given to our college to be very important as it seeks to respond to the challenges of the times and the needs of its students."

- "I take pride in the fact that our college was able to demonstrate the standards of excellence demanded by your Selection Committee. You are to be commended for your sensitivity to the needs of small independent colleges for assistance in carrying out our missions."

Typical Comments of Non-Winners

It may also be interesting to note some of the comments of the non-winners:

- "While I regret that in view of the keen competition for the relatively limited number of such grants we were unsuccessful in this program, I want to commend you and your associates for the understanding of and the commitment to private higher education which is evidenced by the work of the Foundation."

- "The next decade will present difficult challenges for independent colleges. While we feel confident of our condition and ability to meet them, we solicit the continued interest of organizations like the Brunswick Foundation."

- "Success in each of the five areas outlined in your guideline is, of course, critical to the vitality and well being of any excellent liberal arts college."

- "We regret that our college was not among the recipients of your grants, but we recognize the difficulty of your task and applaud your efforts to encourage and support small independent colleges."

- "We were hoping for an affirmative reply, but are mindful of the wide participation and keen competition in the program."

- "Should the Brunswick Foundation develop similar programs, we would welcome the opportunity to participate."

Comments of Other Participants

Typical of the comments of small college presidents who are participating in the current program are:

- "Your program has helped us re-examine our goals to see how closely our program is 'mirroring' this mission."

- "We've been through an accrediting association self-study, but your questionnaire has caused us to consider new concepts for review of our total college program."

- "You certainly have recognized in your program the ingredients of a well run and successful college in today's small college market. Congratulations!"

- "Your innovative program 'hit the nail on the head' and awarded those items that benefit students of the institutions rather than those that are often designed to build institutional visibility, professional reputations or advance careers."

- "Your program strategy has instilled in many of us in the small college world to live by the adage, 'Never be satisfied with what you are already doing and always strive to do better.' Thanks for the push!"

- "Hats off to a funding agency that intends to reward those performing their jobs competently and with professionalism."

QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

(This section sets forth the Foundation's view of the issues of Quality facing higher education)

Today's Quality of Education is Questioned

For years U.S. industries have engaged in a number of activities to see that quality was built into the product and ensure customer satisfaction. In recent years, however, the level of product quality has dropped. In industry after industry, the Japanese have eclipsed the U.S. as a technological leader, having surpassed us in radios, T.V., steel, and autos. American industry, after years of false starts and indecision, is now mounting a broad counter-attack to close the gap in product quality.

In U.S. higher education, a similar story is unfolding. This Fall there are 12.5 million men and women attending college and the question being asked is, "Are those now engaged in earning diplomas really being educated?" College officials have felt that they were delivering a "quality education," but now they hear complaints that admissions standards have been lessened and hundreds with lower SAT and ACT test scores are being admitted. Requirements are being diluted and students can now succeed in college with less rigorous preparation. Students can't read or write and remedial classes are overflowing. Students are receiving academic credit for studying whatever they please. Classes are large. Much teaching is done by graduate students, and libraries are understocked. Increasingly, undergraduate institutions are abandoning their stated purposes and taking on professional and vocational functions that are proper domains of other higher educational institutions. Some feel that these colleges have reduced their quality by revising and/or distorting their missions to capture some special market and have become colleges of convenience. Added to these complaints, one also learns that there are many colleges where the spirit of learning is not visible, where curiosity and study are unknown, and the very idea of intellectual rigor and excellence is considerably undervalued.

Why Should Quality Be A Concern?

More and more educators are being quoted as saying that quality is most certainly going to be the foremost national concern of the 1980's. But why will this be so?

It is well known that money is tight and colleges are working with limited funds. But companies, foundations, governments, and other funding agencies are concerned with the efficient allocation of these scarce resources. It is only logical that high quality programs and institutions will be judged to deserve the most support. Colleges will need to demonstrate to donors that what they are doing is more worthy to be supported than their rivals.

Not only are we in a period of economic constraints, but the colleges are faced with a projected decrease in the size of the pool of college applicants. Simple promises of "quality education" will not work much longer for there are too many making the same promise. Many students are quite concerned as to "where to go" and the quality of the degree may eventually be the "payoff" in

their minds. Then, too, the potential student is constantly asking "whether or not to go to college" because of the tight labor market and the lessened value of the college degree.

From the perspective of both students and funders traditional measures of quality may be inappropriate; therefore, this behooves us to review more and more of this important aspect -- quality.

What Is Quality?

Quality in higher education is an enduring concern among educators and public alike. Yet, virtually everyone finds difficulty in determining what it is, how to measure it, who should determine quality and certify it. Equally significant is what is being done to promote the quality concept. Almost everyone affiliated with higher education sets forth a note on quality which is quite vague and little understood by the public.

Many college presidents prepare slick Annual Reports for their "publics" and invariably report on the "quality institution" he manages. When faculty groups sit down with the administration to discuss or negotiate yearly salaries it is not unusual for them to proclaim that quality could be improved considerably if only more money was forthcoming. Anyone reading their local newspapers will often find ads placed by the Admissions Office that attempt to attract students with assertions of "educational excellence being offered" or "a solid and quality academic experience for you when you build your future at our college." Or development officers regularly develop "quality educational campaigns" to entice their funding bodies and individuals.

But what is this nebulous thing all refer to as "quality"?

Educational Programs

Some colleges may explain "quality" by referring to their educational programs. They will cite illustrations of "being alert to new needs in the changing world," "willing to revise or discard programs if not meeting student needs," "constant evaluating programs to make the necessary improvements," and "making cost effective reviews of their academic programs."

Students

Other colleges will develop lofty mission statements of what aims and objectives are being achieved with students and feel that is "quality." For example, it is not unusual to hear educators talk of the "formation of attitudes and habits to enrich the student's spiritual, emotional and intellectual life," "development of skills that are socially useful and personally satisfying," "providing essential knowledge and an appreciation of Western intellectual tradition," or "exposing students to many learning experiences to broaden them, prepare for a career, or understand themselves and their world." And still others may refer to students of theirs that "make it in the world of work and in graduate schools or become successful both professionally and as a human being after leaving college."

Faculty

A third concept of "quality" as seen by educators is their faculty. Some colleges are quick to cite the fact that they "hire top-notch faculty with strong credentials and who place learning of students as their first priority," "support superior faculty with good policies on tenure, promotion and merit increases," and "provide a system for evaluation and on-going professional growth and development."

Physical Facilities

A fourth item frequently mentioned as synonymous with "quality" by still others is the physical facilities. "We provide a good library and provide up-to-date tools, equipment and facilities to support learning," is the utterance of many.

Other Ideas

And if one sought out individual colleges on their concept of "quality," other ideas would be set forth as "we insure the intelligent allocation of resources," "we provide for quality of life on campus," etc.

If the colleges were surveyed one would secure a wide range of definitions of quality which to the common layman would be confusing and in some instances appear to be public relations efforts.

Techniques For Judging or Measuring Quality

But if one wished to discount these P.R. aspects and realistically assess the quality of an institution, how would one proceed? There are a number of perceptions of counselors, teachers, applicants, faculty, students, and employers, but how accurate are they?

- For example, when high school counselors or teachers recommend colleges, do they really know what colleges are best or are they influenced considerably by a kind of folklore regarding what are the "best" institutions?

- If applicants perceive a college to be of high quality, are these perceptions consistent with the opinions of students who are actually enrolled at the college?

- Faculty of colleges also have perceptions of quality colleges, both regionally and nationally. For example, faculty often feel colleges in the northeast are better than those in the midwest or west. But is this really so?

- Then too, there are employers who base their hiring on impressions they have of institutional quality rather than on the performance and know how of the applicant.

Wide Variety of Measurement Assessments

Techniques for judging or measuring quality vary considerably and are far from an exact science.

Traditional Measures

An assessment of educational quality may be based on such traditional measures as the age of the institution, the technical or social elitism of its faculty or students, or ratings by its peers.

Quantitative Measures

Some attempt to utilize quantitative measures as the basis for determining quality; as, the number of PhD's on the faculty, the number of faculty publications, the number of alumni in "Who's Who", the number of Fulbright or Rhodes scholars, the ratio of students to faculty, the number of students that graduate after four years versus the number that entered, the number of students that go on to graduate school, the dollars spent per student for instructional purposes, the number of books in the library, the amounts received from each segment of donors as compared to others, etc.

Process Measures

Others utilize process measures; that is, if certain processes are in place, a good education should result. If Admissions establishes a careful selection of its students, it should contribute to quality. For example, if the average verbal score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test of the freshmen entering one school is a dismal 455 for men and 463 for women as against a high 600 at some other college, one might consider the latter to have a higher quality. This latter school would, no doubt, continue to attract very able students. If a college further did a careful job in its appointment of faculty including his or her achievements and teaching ability and developed a good promotional and tenure policy, it should contribute to quality of the institution. Additional examples of process measures may be the curriculum (including determination of courses, requirements, etc.) and financial management.

Effectiveness of the Learning Program

Still another technique for measuring quality is to ascertain the effectiveness of the learning programs conducted. More and more colleges are moving into this realm. Typical schemes are referred to as "value added" (where one tries to assess what the student gets out of college, how much he or she has grown, taking into consideration what students bring with them to the program), "measurement of outcomes" (where attempts are made to evaluate student learning in terms of personal development, student performances; (i.e., written or oral responses designed to demonstrate accomplishment of specific outcomes), or "competency based education" which applies outcomes methodology to all or parts of the curriculum. For example, a college may set forth areas of competence toward which it orients its teaching and for demonstration of which it holds its students accountable. Some outcomes of education may include: effective communication ability, analytical capability, problem solving ability, and effective social interaction. In other words, a competent student demonstrates certain abilities and he or she is also committed to using them.

From the above it can readily be seen that there are a number of different techniques for measuring quality and a number of dimensions of quality including available resources; strength of faculty; the program and its contribution to not only the student, but to the community and general social well being, student satisfaction during college, immediately afterward and several years later; and, the institution itself as to where it is, where it has come from and what its potential for improvement is.

By using a number of different dimensions and definitions of quality or a variety of techniques for measuring it, one may develop many different lists of top ranked colleges. These lists of quality colleges will also vary substantially according to the criteria used, the population served, or even at the time the quality is assessed. After all, colleges do not maintain the same level of quality over the years. The challenge to maintain quality should not be interpreted as a sweeping plan to establish high admission standards and a ruthless grading system. Quality institutions are not confined to those with highly selective admissions, although quality may be easier to maintain in such institutions than those whose mandate is to provide open educational opportunity. High quality may be found among open admission institutions, and inferior quality may be found among highly selective institutions.

Who Assesses Quality in Higher Education

We have reviewed techniques of measuring quality and the dimensions of quality, but who is it that is involved in this process of assessing quality?

Even though there are many traditional organizations and institutions involved, the most recent and unique is that published by Ed Fiske in the "New York Times Selective Guide to Colleges." Like an honest critic of almost anything else, whether it be books, plays, restaurants or movie actors, he identified 265 of the "best and most interesting" from among the almost 2000 institutions calling themselves four year colleges and awarding bachelor degrees. To rank "academic quality," "social activity," and "quality of life" at these institutions he employed a system from five to one stars for each criterion. The grade definition depends on "range of course offerings, level of teaching and research, the academic ability of the students, and the quality of the library." He may be accused of bias, blindness or snobbery, but it's at least one man's approach.

Of course, Change Magazine and other journals have published evaluations of professional schools in the past and just recently the National Academy Press rated the quality of graduate programs.

In the life of every college, accreditation and reaccreditation takes on great importance. In such a review virtually every dimension and program of the college is carefully examined by a trained and experienced team of administrators and faculty from other colleges (representing a regional accrediting group) after the local college develops a thorough self analysis of its operations.

In addition, Professional Associations conduct regular reviews of specific areas of the college. State Boards of Higher Education made enormously stronger in the 1970's have moved into areas of curriculum quality control, although primary responsibility for academic programs is still acknowledged to rest with faculty members.

Efforts To Bolster Quality

Despite the regular assessments by accrediting associations, professional associations and others, state governments and local colleges are not leaving this area of quality to chance. The stakes are too high. We therefore find state legislatures requesting that their Departments of Education tighten their academic standards. Some individual colleges have established Standards of Academic Progress that enables the college to monitor a student's program and requires that students complete courses in proper sequence, maintain a minimum grade level, and overcome deficiencies for them to continue in college. Other colleges are targeting on a specific academic program for extensive development or refinement. According to a survey of 272 colleges, 88% are engaged in revising their curricula and 59% of these are increasing their programs of required courses in general education. These and other measures certainly should move American Colleges back on the road of higher quality education.

Conclusions

Overall, the concept of quality education has many definitions. It also has a host of educators and organizations attempting to identify and establish a meaningful measurement index. Because of its many dimensions and interpretations, it remains an elusive concept to many educators.

It is, however, a significant issue and deserves attention as the comments from our educators so clearly indicate.

Our colleges are facing real and severe pressures that endanger their very existence. They must be willing to take the necessary steps to maintain and improve the quality to insure both the future of these important institutions and a high quality education for the students they serve.

The Brunswick Foundation, through its Small College Program, plans to remain active and visible in encouraging realization of this goal of striving continuously for excellence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION
in
Colleges of Pride, Determination, and Optimism

(The following is a description of a university team's analysis of the responses made by small U.S. colleges to the Brunswick Foundation's questions on the Quality of Education)

Small colleges traditionally give students individual attention not available at larger private and public institutions. Faculty dedicated to liberal arts undergraduate education are challenged at such colleges to foster growth in individual students. But now the very future of these colleges is threatened because of changing demographic and economic conditions.

Small colleges increasingly depend upon supplementary sources of income, such as contributions from alumni and grants from private donations. The Brunswick Foundation has demonstrated its concern for small independent colleges through its Small College Program (described more in detail in the first section of this brochure). College presidents are invited to compete for ten unrestricted grants of $3,000 each by writing brief responses to questions about their efforts to maintain quality education while competing in today's higher education market.

Application questions are open-ended in form. Thus, respondents present the information which they deem most relevant. Some chose to highlight their institution's staunch traditions; others emphasized change. Many gave a broad picture of their schools, while others concentrated on particularly strong or innovative components of their programs. Some were quite brief; others wrote at great length.

The open format elicited responses which are rich and revealing and which require rather complex analysis (see Appendix A). This report discusses responses on the topic, Quality of Education. Our analysis of a sample of the applications reveals both common trends and unique approaches.

In general, according to the responses of these presidents, small colleges appear to be facing their challenges with a spirit of undaunted pride, active determination, and guarded optimism. The following quotation captures the prevailing mood:

> "The college is 150 years old; it has withstood two major depressions and three wars. We are confident that with proper planning and dedicated work we will be here for another 150 years."

Quality of Education

The question reported here was asked in 1981. It has two parts: (a) How do you define quality of education? (b) What are you doing to maintain or improve the quality of education at your institution? Most educators agree that quality is a relative multi-dimensional concept eluding precise definition. Despite this difficulty, respondents articulated a variety of views. Many definitions reflect the substance of college mission statements; others are lists of defined key elements. Most statements demonstrated congruence between definitions and efforts to maintain or improve quality.

For the first part of the question, definitions of "quality of education" were classified according to their dominant orientation, i.e., liberal arts, career education, specialties, and so on. For the second part of the question, typical activities for maintaining or improving quality were identified. These activities include some directed toward educational programs, some toward students, some toward faculty, and so on.

Definitions of Quality

The five most common orientations in these definitions reflect either traditional liberal arts, a blend of professional education and liberal arts, a career-oriented focus, an educational outcomes approach, or a well-developed speciality which gives the college unique identity. By these categories, we do not intend to deny commonalities. Indeed, the idea of education of the whole person, for instance, is a theme present in virtually all definitions.

Traditional Liberal Arts

Given the historical link between small private colleges and the liberal arts tradition, it is not surprising that a large number of schools define quality in terms of the values traditionally embraced by classical, humanistic educators. As one puts it:

> "The quality of an educational program is determined by the extent to which it is successful in developing the students' capacities for critical analysis and evaluation, for aesthetic appreciation, for creative thought and expression, and for understanding of our own and other cultures. In addition to concentrated study in a particular field, an education of quality offers the opportunity for rewarding investigations of a broad range of academic disciplines and encourages students to see the inter-relationships between differing approaches to knowledge."

Some "traditionalists" focus on the "willingness and ability of students and faculty to engage in critical thinking." Such educators promulgate, as desirable attributes, "curiosity, a capacity for careful observation and systematic analysis; tolerance; and enlightened judgment." They stress "tough-mindedness and the rejection of simplistic answers regarding the great issues of mankind." They seek to "raise questions as well as provide answers;" to promote understanding of "theoretical knowledge, including competing theoretical viewpoints;" to graduate students who are willing to "expose themselves to intellectual risks in their thinking;" and to challenge students to expand their "capacity to deal with abstractions and complexities and to be comfortable with subtleties of thought and language."

Advanced intellectual capacities and the habits of "self-direction and independence in learning" are described in terms of lifelong learning:

> "A quality education is viewed as one that does not impart a body of knowledge, per se, but rather, promotes a concept of what learning is, how to pursue it, and how to acquire more knowledge and to make decisions based on that knowledge.... We believe a quality education gives our women the 'tools for learning' so that they may continue the process well beyond graduation...."

Acquiring these tools presupposes mastery of basic skills in "written and oral communication, quantitative skills, linguistics, and logical skills." It also implies a broad base of knowledge in the humanities, the social sciences and natural sciences. These colleges contend that only with such requisities is the student likely to attain loftier intellectual goals.

The traditionalists are also concerned about values. They speak to "the value of reflection, a sensitivity to the needs of others." One refers to the educated individual as a person who can "evaluate life's experiences within a broad context and is able to make discriminating moral choices." A second seeks to "foster a sense of commitment...to the lifelong task of living as a useful citizen, fulfilling a productive role in society while conducting oneself with honor, integrity, and purpose." Another contends that "contacts with the greatest minds, ideas, and spirits of human history help the individuals to...identify and discriminate lifetime values." "Stimulation of the students' moral sense;" and a focus on "altruistic, service-oriented values" are viewed as desirable goals.

Some applicants emphasize religious values in their definition of quality education:

> "Quality education in the spiritual areas requires that the faculty and administration place before the students by precept and example high standards of behavior based upon Biblical principles as embodied in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It requires that students be continuously challenged with the vision of the Christian message and mission, and that they be encouraged to translate Biblical principles into the practicalities of daily life...."

In addition to intellectual and moral or spiritual development, a number of respondents mention aesthetic sensitivity, creativity and "appreciation and understanding for the wealth of vicarious experience that is of Western tradition." Several address the realm of personal growth, that is the capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation, the crystalization of an identity and positive self-concept, and the formation of a mature sense of responsibility toward self and others. Finally, there is recognition of social change: preparedness for change and a willingness to view change as growth; the ability to "understand the impact that social institutions have on individuals, and analyze one's own and others' personal functioning within social institution."

As a summary, consider this respondent's statement:

> "We aspire to more than providing students with opportunities to acquire information. Our mission involves valuing each student as an individual; helping each student develop a world-life view in which to understand and develop his major competencies; challenging the student to think for himself; encouraging positive lifestyles that will enable the student to serve his family, his profession, his community, and his church. Quality of education, therefore, is inextricably bound to quality of life."

Liberal Arts and Career Education

Many traditionalists assume that with a sound liberal arts education the individual is prepared to function in any profession. Critics might argue that a "pure" liberal arts curriculum is unlikely to produce individuals prepared to enter the market place. Several colleges express the belief that "they must not merely leave it to the students to find the link between a liberal arts education and the professions." One speaks to seeking a balance:

> "We recognize dangers in an approach too vocational, too technical, too heavily oriented toward solving the problems of the moment. The dangers are narrowness, parochialism, and inflexibility -- in short, a lack of relevance to problems yet unseen. There is a need for the quiet contemplation of old truths and tested experiences. Such an education gives depth and perspective. But sole reliance on this kind of learning poses dangers of its own. More importantly, it denies students an opportunity to test their education in the world as it exists. We believe in the efficacy of a liberal education encompassing environmental awareness and career preparation."

Another articulates the merger more formally:

> "The basic purpose of the College is to provide a quality program of higher education, with emphasis on both liberal and specialized learning.... A liberal education is defined as a broad understanding of mankind's physical, cultural, and intellectual heritage and the relationship of this heritage to contemporary society. A specialized education provides the background and competence necessary to pursue a field of study and to participate in a vocation intended to advance the welfare of the individual and of society as a whole."

The motto of one college: "Teaching How to Live and How to Make a Living" encapsulates its orientation. Another states: "to this basic (liberal arts) approach we have blended a very down-to-earth career preparation program that runs the gamut from simple assistance in career selection to internships in

area business, laboratories, and agencies to provide practical experience in a chosen career field." A third respondent refers to "these highly specialized times that hunger for technical skills" and goes on to describe the integration of "technical and specialized knowledge with a strong liberal arts curriculum.... The bottom line on quality of education is that we produce students who cannot be replaced by a machine of any kind...if they can be replaced by a machine or even fear that they can be, then they should be." The well-educated person offers both knowledge and humanity.

Leadership is another concern. "The aim of undergraduate education, as we see it, is the preparation of able students for positions of leadership in business and the professions." "A quality education...must not only provide students with professional skills, but must prepare them to assume leadership roles in their professions and communities." Definitions with a leadership focus tend to include greater elaboration of traditional liberal arts elements of educational quality than of the career preparation aspects.

Not everything in both the traditional liberal arts and career preparation can be provided. One characteristic of the liberally educated person, apparently displaced, is the individual conversant in a foreign language. These colleges more likely spoke of proficiency in the language of the computer than of proficiency in a foreign language.

Most appear to endorse a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional preparation for educating the "whole" person. As one applicant states:

> "The quality of education, can, therefore, be judged on how effectively the powerful incentives of professional education and the depth and understanding of liberal arts and theological studies are joined in a concerted program to develop the individual into a whole person, a person with real intellectual, social, spiritual and physical skills."

Career Preparation

A few of the respondents equate quality of education with quality of career preparation. For these applicants liberal integrative studies represent an important but decidedly secondary focus.

> "The College's motto is 'The Competitive Edge -- Preparing Men and Women for the World of Work.' Therefore, we define quality education as that education which prepares men and women for applications-oriented, upwardly mobile, career development.... To succeed at providing this type of education the College curriculum has been designed to interact with the needs of local industry."

Focus on Educational Outcomes

The above definitions tend to emphasize qualities of the persons graduated by the college. The remaining orientations focus more on the educational process and on data about graduates.

These definitions contain such statements as: "the quality of education can be defined and measured in terms of outcomes." There is also concern for the specificity of objectives and for adequate measurement of effects.

> "I define the 'quality' of an education program by its effectiveness.... If a College has clear objectives, if it clearly communicates these to its prospective students, if they understand what they will learn and which skills they will acquire, and then if the students really do learn and become more skillful, then the college is of the highest quality. Effectiveness has to be measured rather than just perceived or assumed. Faculty teaching has to be carefully and regularly evaluated. Programs and courses have to be periodically evaluated. Student development has to be measured: students have to be tested and questioned about what they have learned both before and after the educational experience."

The "value-added" notion is a currently popular version of this orientation. The value-added approach is tied to the systems view of educational process, one which evaluates the throughput and outcomes of education in relation to the input. Educators subscribing to this view begin by assessing student input indices such as ability (as seen in high school rank, ACT scores), biographical characteristics (e.g. cultural background and gender), and nonintellective characteristics (e.g., leadership, pragmatism). These indices provide only the input baseline and the major concern is with throughput processes and outcomes.

Colleges have defined the value-added approach with varying degrees of precision. Definitions range from "value-added...seeks to meet the person at his present level of knowledge and development, and enable that person to make as much progress as possible for that individual," to:

> "The quality of an education is widened by its effects. It depends as much upon the process by which it is acquired as it does upon specific outcomes. The <u>value added</u> by an education is revealed by the mastery of skills, by the attainment of competence, by the acquisition of knowledge, and perhaps even more importantly, by the ability to make sound and informed decisions. These are the more tangible and measurable aspects of a quality education. Beyond this there is the enrichment which gives meaning to one's personal existence which defies measure."

The concern with output makes measurable goals an important component of a value-added definition. The above quote refers to both tangible and measurable aspects. The following is an interpretation of the tangible:

> "The best example of our success is a student who selected the college because he wanted to play football on a nationally-ranked football team. As a freshman, we could not determine any interest other

> than football. Within two years, he had become an active member of the student body, writing for the college newspaper, and participating in a play. Playing football is no longer his number one priority."

This is followed by a more prosaic description of the measurable:

> "Empirical evidence for assessing quality can be demonstrated by our high scores on the Graduate Record Examinations, the Medical Admissions Tests, the Law Aptitude Tests, as well as other standardized criteria which measure the quality of undergraduate students' performance as well as reflecting curriculum validity and faculty effectiveness."

An editorial comment by one respondent serves to summarize the concept:

> "Using the value-added (or input-output) approach, Harvard may or may not be providing a quality education. What Harvard and similar institutions do is take the cream of the crop. Generally speaking, when you put cream in one end, you will get cream out of the other end, no matter what you have or have not done.
>
> We believe the opposite is not necessarily true. We believe you can put minimal-achievement students in one end of the funnel and have achieving students come out of the other end. In order to accomplish this, you must provide a value-added education."

Focus on Speciality

Some schools chose to define quality in terms of retrenchment. A positive consequence of retrenchment is concentration of efforts in an area of established or developing expertise. An institution seeks

> "...to continue as a small College. We believe, therefore, that it is essential to focus our resources on select areas of concentration. This strategy makes it possible for us to help our students develop an awareness of the complexities involved in these areas and a grasp of their methods, theories and data."

One college proceeded as follows:

> "The College currently is participating in Project QUE (Quality Undergraduate Education), a program sponsored by the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges (CASC) and funded by the Kellogg Foundation. The purpose of Project QUE is to help participating colleges identify an area of the curriculum to be developed over a four-year period to the highest quality possible. Under this program, the College examined its entire academic program to identify one

> which would become the major target of further study. The environmental studies program and related outdoor education program were selected."

Or the specialty focus may be on a particular group of students:

> "The College seeks students with limited financial resources who have ability and an interest in the Great Commitments of the College; eighty percent of the entering class are from the College's Appalachian territory. Generally, the students are among the first generation of their family to attend College and come from predominantly small high schools. We seek to provide an academic, labor, and curricular residential program that makes it possible for students to gain more from the time they spend here than they would gain at another educational institution."

Other Beliefs

Three other basic beliefs (in addition to educating the "whole" person, as mentioned above) are frequently included in these definitions of quality, and they appear to transcend the five classes just introduced. The first is belief in the practice of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and intervening to maximize individual learning potential.

The second is belief in the primacy of teaching:

> "A college has three basic goals: 'to transmit, to extend, and to apply knowledge.' These are related to the three missions of teaching, research, and public service. We have focused our attention on the first of these. It has been our contention that excellence in teaching will, by its nature, extend into research on the part of the faculty, and applications of knowledge in society by the students."

A third belief is in the importance of student-faculty interaction:

> "The quality of an education is determined by the nature of the interaction between faculty and students. A high quality education requires intellectually capable and educationally oriented students, well-educated teacher/scholars interested in the teaching/learning process, and an environment which encourages formal and informal dialogue on subjects which contribute to intellectual and personal growth."

Summary

As we stated at the outset, quality is an elusive multi-dimensional concept. Any attempt at categorization is somewhat artificial because few definitions refer exclusively to a single orientation.

Reviewing the five orientations revealed by our content analysis yields the following comparisons between schools of under 1000 enrollment and those of over 1000 enrollment.

Orientation	Over 1000 (n=91)	Under 1000 (n=84)
Traditional Liberal Arts	47%	43%
Liberal Arts/Career	19%	19%
Career	1%	5%
Educational Outcomes	19%	20%
Specialty Focus	2%	4%
Other	12%	9%

There is little difference in category distribution between larger and smaller colleges. In both groups, traditional liberal arts orientation to quality of education prevails. The presence of "career" and "speciality focus" viewpoints in this group of applicants may indicate trends in those directions, but our small sample permits only speculation.

It is evident, however, that small colleges encompass a diversity of educational frameworks and goals. Let one of them offer the final word:

> "Quality of education is not an absolute value against which a college or university can be measured. Rather, it is a dynamic variable which is defined by an individual institution's goals and objectives. The pluralism of American education yields quality in many different forms.

Approaches to Quality

A number of institutional features which serve as indices of quality are also amenable to change. These include educational programs offered by the institution, process and outcome components of student education, qualifications and performance of faculty, institutional support services, and the quality of life afforded by the campus milieu. Most respondents describe efforts to improve quality in terms of one or all of these indices.

Educational Programs

More than 40% of the colleges report a process for regular review of educational programs. These reviews ensure that curricular offerings keep pace with changing student needs and definitions of quality education. Continuing review, development, and improvement of academic programs and academic policy is usually the designated responsibility of a permanent committee variously known as the Academic Council, the Academic Policy Committee, or the Curriculum Committee. A typical review process is described as follows:

> "Each year certain programs of the College are subject to review by the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, according to a long-term schedule established by the Committee. After collecting data,

> and soliciting opinions of student participants and faculty instructors in the programs, recommendations for change are made. New courses and new programs of instruction must also be approved by this faculty committee. New programs are, in addition, submitted to the entire faculty for approval."

Review committees often include the Academic Dean, the Registrar, chairpersons of academic divisions, and a select number of elected or appointed faculty and students.

Program reviews also take the form of self-studies by ad hoc committees such as an in-depth study of two areas (life sports and teaching values) described by one respondent. Another describes a program in which faculty audit courses and symposia on areas "in which knowledge is expanding rapidly, in which there are particularly sharp controversies, or in which there is potential for curricular development."

Professional consultants and visitors are part of some evaluation systems. Several schools participate in the curriculum review and reform project conducted by the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges (CASC). Other applicants describe departmental evaluation through a visiting committee process. One particularly comprehensive system which incorporates elaborate self-studies and external visitors is described as follows:

> "Several years ago the faculty established a procedure whereby each academic program would be reviewed at least every eight years. These reviews are separate from the self-study for the regional accrediting association, and were designed to provide an opportunity for the Faculty Curriculum Committee to focus its attention on the strengths and weaknesses of individual programs. The department self-study involves collecting information from alumni and students, reviewing similar programs at other liberal arts colleges, and formulating recommendations for future actions. The Academic Dean then arranges for two or three visitors, who are familiar with the particular program, to come to the campus for two days and assist the departmental faculty, the Academic Dean, and the Curriculum Committee in identifying ways in which the College could most effectively strengthen the program. After approval by the Curriculum Committee, the recommendations are implemented by the faculty."

Program reviews result in a variety of changes ranging from course revisions to more radical reorganizations such as the decision by one college to "limit majors to only five and to cluster them in one area -- the Human Services."

General education requirements are the object of particularly close scrutiny. A number of schools describe reviewing, rethinking or revising their stance on distribution or general education requirements. One views this phenomenon as a backlash from the late 60's and early 70's trend toward relaxing or

discarding distribution requirements. Several colleges have re-instituted distribution course requirements or have broadened requirements "to encompass all disciplines in the liberal arts tradition." One respondent boasts of a "core curriculum which has been maintained and improved over the last 35 years." The curriculum requires that students devote 40% of their undergraduate studies to specific courses in science, mathematics, the humanities, and the social sciences.

Providing a broad liberal arts background is the object of one college's "three tier" curriculum:

> "The tiers are titled "FOUNDATIONAL STUDIES, EXPERIENTIAL STUDIES AND INTEGRATIVE STUDIES.... FOUNDATIONAL STUDIES allow the student to feel the liveliness of learning in five core areas. EXPERIENTIAL STUDIES provide a chance for greater probing and allow the student "doing opportunities" in each area. INTEGRATIVE STUDIES provide three types of cross-discipline learning -- a capstone course in the student's field of concentration, religion and philosophy courses dealing with ultimate questions of man, and courses dealing with questions like war and peace, views of man, and man and nature."

Curricular reorganization sometimes emphasizes interdisciplinary studies. These programs purport to offer students a more flexible and a more coherent program of study than that provided by the "discipline-distribution" model. Such a program replaces the notions of "major" and "minor" fields of study with "an area of concentration where a student will take a number of interdisciplinary courses to supplement the major rather than be restricted to a single discipline in a minor."

The well-publicized nation-wide decline in basic communication skills among high school graduates has also prompted competency-based requirements in basic reading, writing and general communication skills. As one applicant reports:

> "Effective with the entering class of fall, 1982, the College's new competencies requirement will be instituted. Initially, students will be required to demonstrate competence in writing, mathematics and analysis and problem-solving in order to be granted a degree; other areas of competence will be identified in the next few years, as the college gains experience with this approach."

Another program is a nationally recognized model for communication skill development. The college has "been successful in instilling a responsibility for communications skills development in all faculty members." The faculty have subsequently been successful in implementing a program to develop communication skills across the curriculum.

Thus, colleges have worked to increase the breadth and depth of their traditional programs and to improve the literacy of their students. But they have not ignored new programs to meet the changing needs of students.

Fourteen respondents from the smaller schools and 22 from the larger report adding one or more new programs. One college's listing of new programs includes a minor in physics, majors in computer science and criminal justice, master's programs in business administration and special education, and dual degree programs in physics-engineering and in chemistry-engineering. Another school has added majors in broadcasting, building construction, engineering, business, and teacher education while noting cautiously, "The College is attempting to provide strong career choices on a liberal arts foundation -- not a 'something for everyone' diversity."

Health field careers is the "new" program area for one school. As many as "55 percent of the college's students are enrolled in health related majors" and the college claims to have been the first in the state or nation to develop baccalaureate programs in several health fields.

New programs are not confined to career education. Improvements in curricular offerings also include the development of a fine arts degree for which the school added three new faculty members. In another instance a "presidential honors course has been initiated for honor students to be taught by the president using research competed by four faculty members."

Externship and internship programs have been developed at some schools. In one institution "the concept of the externship as a method to explore career opportunities or to apply theory to practice is widespread...." Another respondent introduces the idea of an internship network:

> "An internship network is being expanded to provide first-hand exposure to business and the professions. A cooperative education program begun during 1980-81 is giving students hands-on experience. The National Resources Committee, a national leadership group of alumni, parents, and friends is undertaking to expand further internships on a national basis and will undertake also to sponsor a January Inter-term Career Exploration Program."

Other nontraditional, "broadening" learning opportunities are reported by several colleges. Several have study programs abroad. Some report academic calendars which provide an "interim" period (i.e., a month between academic terms) which permits flexible and concentrated individual learning experiences. Interim projects include field experiences and internships, courses at other colleges, and study abroad. One college president views these projects as opportunities for faculty and students to "explore the new and untried...to move beyond traditional classroom courses and teaching methods, to consider topics in relevant ways and places, to observe issues in action, and to encourage the responsible self-direction of one's educational development."

Outside funding is sought to make program expansion and improvement possible. Representative sources include W. K. Kellogg, Rober Wood Johnson, Ford, Hewlett, Mellon, Bush, and Northwest Area Foundations; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Commonwealth Fund; and the U.S. Office of Education (Title III). Approximately a third of the applicants mentioned some type of outside funding. Government funding is not, however, without its critics:

> "In its 136 year history, the College has never sought or accepted any sort of government funding. We have consequently remained free from federal quotas and continue to focus on individual merit as the fundamental criterion for admitting students and for hiring faculty and staff. This has helped us to avoid an encroaching mediocrity and to sustain and increase the quality of our academic programs."

Further discussion of program innovations can be found above in the "Curriculum Changes" section of this report.

Students

Improvements in quality of the experience of students may affect either the teaching-learning process or the outcomes at which the program is aimed.

Process

Program success depends upon the teaching-learning process used in implementing the program. A number of colleges emphasize student participation and involvement. Two respondents comprehensively describe their efforts to broaden students' learning experiences:

> "Those involved in music present recitals to learn the art of performing under pressure, and artists hold student exhibitions. Students are encouraged to participate in campus activities, which range from student government to the Model United Nations organization. Those desiring spiritual fulfillment also have the option of attending a weekly chapel service and joining the campus spiritual life committee. Students also have the opportunity to participate in a number of foreign study trips. These have included marine biology research studies at Australia's Great Barrier Reef; historical and cultural studies in Europe, Asia, and Africa; entomology research in Mexico; and literature studies in England and Scotland."

> "We nurture and develop the research capabilities of our students and faculty in the belief that the best form of education is participation in its creative uses. Students are extensively involved in creative research and scholarship with faculty members in all areas. As an example: a recent National Science Foundation grant allowed an anthropology student to develop a curriculum unit on local American Indian history for use in public school fourth grade classes. It has now been adopted officially as part of the school district program.... To display the results of these research efforts we run regular Faculty Forum presentations, an Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium juried by our faculty members, and regular student presentations in departmental seminars."

When the goal is the development of the student's personal value system, colleges expose students to differing points of view.

> "We attempt to help students shape their value systems and style through convocations, chapel, and special emphasis series. These activities provide the students with some options, alternatives or choices. We then emphasize the fact that we live by our choices."

Students also begin developing the lifelong habit of directing their own lives and contributing to socially relevant ventures.

> "Students are being given an increasing amount of responsibility towards determining their own destiny. This is occuring in their student government, in their curriculum and degree choices, and in the expectations of the faculty for producing excellent work."

> "Responsible Social Involvement is a requirement that every student must complete, with documentation and oral examination, 200 hours of volunteer community or social service in a project of their choice but in the milieu of a responsible agency or institution of society."

One respondent summarizes this process in terms of Chickering's major tasks:

> "...(1) engage the student in making choices; (2) require interaction with diverse individuals and ideas; (3) involve students in direct and varied experiences; (4) involve the student in solving complex intellectual and social problems...; and, (5) involve the student in receiving feedback and making objective self-assessments."

These examples of process are only a small sample of the actual learning experiences alluded to in the definitions of quality. Program descriptions were legion, but elaboration upon the teaching-learning process was exceptional.

Outcome

Outcomes are evident in the capacities and accomplishments of students and alumni. Several schools carefully monitor their students' academic outcomes, including:

> "...close scrutiny of student achievement scores in areas where entrance examinations must be passed as minimal requirements for professional status (e.g., graduate school examinations, CPA examinations, National League of Nurses Tests, State Merit System Examinations, etc.)...."

Others use standardized tests to "compare the results of our instructional programs with those of other institutions and include the feedback in our instructional improvement." Or , as one particularly comprehensive description states:

> "Placement reports on the extent to which graduates are finding employment in fields related to their studies are also collected. The results of these and other surveys and standardized tests are returned to the departments in which graduates majored and the departments are expected to study the reports, comment on them, and reflect their analyses in plans submitted to the Academic Affairs Office. The data on the achievement of general education goals is analyzed by this office and by the Academic Affairs Committee, a college committee including administrations, faculty, and students which is charged with program review and evaluation, and with recommending revisions in core requirements and academic policies, as well as with screening of new course and program proposals."

Some plans are quite complex. One includes a "combination of grade point average, graduate placement success in careers and graduate studies, and major or subject examinations administered by the College."

Most emphasis is placed ultimately on the incidence and level of alumni employment:

> "An alumni study done in fall, 1980, revealed that 100 percent of those men responding were employed fulltime, as opposed to 88 percent nationally. Although 46 percent of women respondents were employed full time (compared to 60 percent nationally), only 2 percent of those unemployed were seeking employment. Incomes of more than $20,000 were reported by 58 percent of men and 85 percent of the male respondents were employed in careers with 'definite potential' or 'possible potential.' Advanced schooling has been taken by 46 percent of all respondents and 14 percent were (at that time) engaged in formal study--a clear indication that our graduates are informed, lifelong learners."

> "The vigor and character of education at the College are continually transformed into impressive practical statistics. More than 80 percent of the College's alumni achieve recognized success in law, business, and medicine, especially in the Southeast. Who's Who, for example, has listed more of our alumni per capita than from any other College in the United States. Annually, approximately 50 percent of each graduating class goes on to graduate, professional, medical, or law school."

Visibility of individual alumni is noted with pride. One college claims:

> "The Chairman of the Board of Sears, Roebuck and Company
> The Chairman of the Board of the Kellogg Company (retired)
> The Chairman of the Board of Carson Pirie Scott and Company (retired)
> The President of Reliance Electric Company
> The Vice President and General Counsel of American Hospital Supply Corporation
> A Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court
> The Most Valuable Player of the National Basketball Association (1979--Seattle Super Sonics)"

Longer range, less tangible alumni outcomes are also noted.

> "Quality of education is also evidenced by the satisfaction of alumni in other areas of life. Of our alumni, 86 percent report satisfaction with their philosophy of life. Those findings indicate value commitment and maturity."

> "In assessing the quality of education, the final measuring stick must be what takes place in the lives of those who receive their diplomas and depart for different realms. Will they be able to translate the knowledge they have learned in the classroom into abilities necessary for their profession? Will they seek to absorb knowledge throughout their lives? Will the education they have received be meaningful enough that they may be successful professionally and--equally important--successful as human beings?"

Finally, one tangible measure of alumni loyalty does not go without mention:

> "Alumni donors to the College consistently exceed national averages both in percentage of contributors and dollar value of the average gift. Graduates are obviously satisfied with the quality of their education."

Faculty

Many respondents note that maintaining a qualified and dedicated faculty is critical to quality education. Over half of the respondents in both school categories report allocating substantial resources for attracting high caliber faculty; providing incentives for them to remain, giving opportunities for their continued professional growth and development, and carrying our regular faculty evaluation. One college president expresses the view of many: "We believe that the college which settles for mediocrity in its faculty builds its educational house on sand. It undercuts its central purpose and shortchanges its students."

Qualifications

Academic credentials are considered by many applicants to be important qualifications. Often they are the decisive criteria in hiring. Although not a guarantee of quality, doctorates and comparable professional achievements are seen to "demonstrate a high level of commitment to pursue learning." One applicant boasts that all but two of its 90 faculty members hold doctorates; another has "established as an immediate goal to increase the percentage of faculty holding doctorate degrees to 50% and the percentage of faculty holding the master's degree plus 30 credit hours or higher to at least 80%."

Reputation of the institutions from which faculty receive degrees is considered an important index of quality training:

> "Above all, faculty must receive their degrees from institutions which have been accredited by regional accreditation bodies.... One also has to examine the credentials of faculty in the context of the degree-conferring institution where the faculty member earned the degree. For example, a Ph.D. in one of the liberal arts disciplines from a prestigious school logically leads one to conclude that the earner of the degree has met the test of rigor established by faculty with national and international reputations. It is the rigor established by leaders in the various fields of endeavor which determine the quality of the education the student receives. This is not to say that graduates of prestigious schools receive an education superior to that of graduates from less superior schools, it is merely to acknowledge that certain universities are paramount because their faculties are in fact the best available in their disciplines, often internationally as well as nationally. An intelligent student studying with a leader in the field is imbued with a sense of rigor, and thereby quality."

Fellowships awarded to faculty members, e.g., Rockefeller and Fullbright awards, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Humanities Center Fellowships, are also cited as measures of professional talent and achievement.

For some colleges, primarily those dedicated to providing career training, professional quality is measured in terms of vocational rather than academic achievement. One respondent reports:

> "We are especially interested in people who have been a success in some other vocation. This is an absolute "must" for any area in business administration. We simply do not hire a professor who has not been <u>successful</u> in the world of business."

Less tangible attributes of faculty are also mentioned, e.g., personal qualifications such as dedication to teaching and ability to relate well to students.

> "Faculty who care for their subject matter and their students, who are concerned with the precise expression of knowledge in their own teaching and in their students' responses, who are thorough in their preparation and in their teaching and who demand a like thoroughness from students and who are eager to share their knowledge and love of learning--such faculty enkindle the highest standards among their students."

The amount of time a professor is willing to spend with students is an important measure of dedication: "Faculty must be willing to spend all of the time necessary, often with an individual student, one at a time, to patiently teach, correct, advise, listen and encourage." At another college, policy requires each faculty member "to be available at least 10 hours a week in his office for consultation with students."

Particularly at smaller colleges, faculty members are often viewed as role models. Therefore, some colleges attempt to assess personal qualities such a "maturity, responsibility and high principles." Others consider faculty lifestyles, particularly whether or not the lifestyle is "consistent with the values of the college."

Diversity is also mentioned as characterizing a quality faculty. One respondent states the belief that pluralism is a key to quality "thus, we have sought individuals with widely different temperaments, strengths, talents, fundamental beliefs and ideas about educational methods." Another seeks diversity with respect to the age and experience levels of its faculty members:

> "Efforts are made to keep a good balance in age and experience on the faculty. It is important to have younger faculty members who are zealous, able-bodied, willing to gain experience and give years of service to the school. Approximately one-third of the current faculty fall between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five. The institution seeks to maintain a proper proportion of those in their middle years who are alert and productive. They have gained experience and are yet physically capable to participate in vigorous activities of the youth-oriented college culture and activities. One-third of the faculty is between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five. Neither should the wisdom, experience and dedication of age be overlooked. Therefore, about one-third of the faculty and administration is represented in the ages from fifty-five to about seventy. These add stability to the institution and are a stabilizing influence for the College. The goal of the College is to keep about one-third in each of the categories of young, middle-age and older faculty members."

Professional Development and Growth

Providing opportunities for professional growth is viewed as critical in attracting and maintaining a quality faculty. Most colleges offer some sort of sabbatical leave program; one reports a program whereby every faculty member has the option to take a sabbatical leave once every seventh term on a three term per year calendar. Travel stipends for attending off-campus activities, such as conferences, conventions, seminars and workshops are also available to faculty at most small colleges in our sample.

Believing that "a professor's ongoing investigation and research invigorates the classroom," many colleges also earmark funds to support faculty research projects. Or money is allocated for "faculty growth contracts," project funds which are primarily for the activities of nontenured faculty. At one school this program is administered by the academic dean who reportedly "spends many hours with young faculty members helping them to plan a program which will result in their professional improvement." Another college concentrates its supports in the summer months, during which faculty "commit themselves to a variety of personal and professional development activities, such as working on publishable contracts, reading intensively in a special field, or preparing courses in new areas." One college recently established a "Faculty Publications Fund" to support production of books and articles; another notes that institutional support for study and research has enabled many professors to complete Ph.D.'s in their field.

To help faculty remain current in their disciplines and general teaching techniques, several colleges sponsor campus workshops. One has "standing committees responsible for research and development of teaching and assessing methodologies in each competence area. Three times a year the entire faculty participates in a week-long series of workshops and demonstrations designed to disseminate our most recent refinements in the teaching/learning/assessing process."

Another school maintains a Faculty Resource Center:

> "Funded, staffed, and supplied with resources, the center gives faculty access to materials, workshops, conferences, consultants to assist them in improving their teaching skills, gaining new knowledge and technique and enhancing their curriculum."

Several schools also report setting aside funds to bring visiting scholars to the college on a yearly or term basis, or for guest speakers whom faculty wish to present to their classes.

To supplement institutional funds, several applicants seek and secure funds for faculty development from outside sources such as major foundations, alumni, or parent associations.

Formative Evaluation

To maintain and improve the quality of their faculties, many respondents mention systems for faculty evaluation, often including evaluation by both administrators and students. Peer evaluation is noted as well, like the

program of "triads in which three faculty members join together for a term to visit each other's classes and critique what they see." Another school has instituted a yearly three-day evaluation meeting during which faculty members are "given to assessing the whole school year including administrative procedures, discussing the instructional process and how to best communicate knowledge to students."

More formally, one evaluation system includes "formal conferences between division chairmen and the faculty in their divisions. These conversations include discussion of points of strength and of concern, and of possible methods of dealing with problem areas." While most applicants did not specify the time frames for their evaluations, one reports "rigorous individual evaluation every two years" and another "provides yearly review until tenure is received." A third refers to a "term-by-term" evaluation system.

Incentives/summative evaluation

Competitive salaries were mentioned by few as a primary means of attracting and retaining superior teachers. Many, however, acknowledged that incentives and rewards for good teaching are vital.
A few schools report a faculty reward system, "the purpose of which is to identify high quality teaching and academic service and reward exemplary performance accordingly." Faculty members at another institution are offered "stipend incentives for the development of new academic programs which can be clearly identified as innovative and meeting the demands of the local industry."

Several respondents report modifications of tenure policies in recent years. One says:

> "We have recently adopted a ten-year probationary period to replace the normal six-year period before a tenure decision is required. This provides greater faculty flexibility as we look ahead toward a smaller student pool in the decade of the eighties. It works to the advantage of some faculty to whom we might not be able to give tenure because of a highly tenured department, even though their research and teaching performance would warrant it. We are now able to extend a probationary contract for the seventh year instead of the terminal contract formerly required when tenure was not granted."

Another has "limited the number of faculty members who can be tenured at any given time to 60 percent." Still another has eliminated tenure completely; teaching contracts at that school are awarded annually.

Support Services

Certain facilities and equipment are basic to educational quality.

Nearly half of the respondents mentioned library improvements. One college president comments on the centrality of the campus library.

> "The library is viewed as the hub of the campus and in recent years much of the College's attention and fiscal resources have gone toward library development and expansion. Construction of a new library and media center was completed in 1980 which increased space allocated to the library from 7,000 to 34,000 square feet, and expanded considerably the facilities needed for more effective library operation including acquisitions, cataloging, references, serials, circulation and administration. A complete audio-visual media services center is housed on the third floor of this three-story structure."

The library program at another college is strengthened through two innovations: "a) an instructional materials center has been added with print and non-print facilities; b) a cost efficiency measure has been installed through a microfiche facility designed to replace expensive teaching journals with relatively inexpensive microfiche copies of the same journals."

To increase the number of library volumes at another college, the Alumni Association arranged that personal libraries of alumni and friends are placed on long-term loan to the college. Later, these books may be donated to the college. This "Alumni Lending Library" will add an additional 10,000 volumes to the existing collection.

Other schools have sought to improve facilities other than libraries. One reports recently renovating its chemistry building and constructing a new athletic fieldhouse to accommodate an expanded coeducational student body. Another reports a deliberate effort to "provide the highest quality facilities we can afford for all disciplines, believing that good education requires relatively uniform quality rather than pockets of affluence and others of depression."

We noted earlier in this report trends toward more substantial support for personal, academic, and particularly career counseling and tutoring services. One college dedicated a new learning resource center and hired both a professional librarian and a full time media specialist. Faculty at this school are "encouraged to incorporate many new learning aids with their instruction -- all the audio-visual and technological resources that enhance good instruction." Another has procured a computerized career education system which "synthesizes student interests and aptitudes":

> "Based on their answers to certain questions, recommended career paths are presented. Often a student who has no notion of his/her career goals is enlightened, chooses a career path and is in a position to design an academic program more astutely. The College will monitor the number and types of career paths chosen by our students and use this information as one more input for curriculum development."

In their struggles to provide quality education in difficult economic times some colleges have pooled their resources. One reports cooperating with four area undergraduate colleges to

"maintain a level of library, health, and business services attainable only in the largest universities." Others have forged their own inter-institutional relationships:

> "Students at both Colleges may freely cross register and even major at the other institution. In some cases this doubles the course offerings available to students. The fact is that in a very real sense the Colleges no longer operate as single Colleges but as a joint enterprise. The two administrations have never worked more closely together. The two faculties have never been better integrated. The two student bodies have never been more concerned with one another's interest. We need to do still more together, however, particularly in the area of joint future planning."

> "Our students now earn BA/MBA and BA/JD degrees in five and six years respectively through existing cooperative arrangements with the university's graduate school of business administration and in the law school. Thus, liberal and professional education is integrated and students are presented with university opportunities in a small college setting. This collaboration offers a national model of consortial development that is being closely observed as a way to maximize resources for purposes of innovation and quality."

Several colleges report efforts to maintain and improve the quality of residential facilities. Relationships among students are viewed as "an extremely important part of the total learning process." As one applicant states, "The attitudes and interpersonal skills found in the close, live-in setting are as important to students' future success as are the specific skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom." Another has sought to improve the quality of the physical environment of the residence halls: "This year I have facilitated the remodeling of the library located in one of the residence halls and the study rooms in each hall."

Quality of Life

Whatever specific areas colleges choose for their efforts to maintain and improve quality education, most use "quality" to refer to the student's development as a whole person, including experience both in and beyond the classroom.

"Quality of life" on campus was mentioned as integral to quality of education by at least 25 of the smaller and 12 of the larger colleges; they described various efforts to "foster a sense of care, support, vigor and community." Many believe that "quality in education springs from personal relationships," and that "the key to maintaining or improving it is to enhance the quality of relationships among students and faculty as well as among students themselves." As another states: "In these areas (i.e., student-student and student-faculty interaction), the educational process of intellectual exchange, social maturity, personal involvement, leadership, development,

etc., actually takes place. Generally, the quality of the holistic development of students defines quality in education."

An environment conducive to the growth of the "whole person" is probably easier to create at a small college than at a larger university, but these colleges realize this goal "takes constant attention and cultivation...the small size of a college does not automatically guarantee that this will occur." It is not surprising that more than a few of the applicants mentioned planning as important for the continuation of quality. One describes a "comprehensive institutional advancement plan" with the intent to "go beyond our present limits to understand our hopes and aspirations for the future of our institution." Another details a similar effort:

> "I am working with staff, trustees, faculty, alumni and students to develop a long-range educational plan for the College. The plan, once developed, must be updated every year so that a current five-year plan will always be in existence. Our basic guideline is that the College must provide a high quality education...in a personalized manner. I believe firmly that the members of an institution should play a significant role in determining its future. This is true because people are loyal to plans they help create and they are more likely to work harmoniously to insure that the plans succeed."

The president's emphasis on the sense of community is underlined by another respondent:

> "We perceive ourselves not as a fragmented body of students, faculty, and administration but as an integrated community of scholars dedicated to excellence,...and caught up in the search for continuing relevance and direction. We do not know where this search will ultimately lead us, but we are certain that properly directed it will prove to be one of the most valued experiences of our lives."

It may be noteworthy that respondent's from the smaller colleges mention "quality of life" or the general ambience of the campus twice as often as applicants from the larger schools. The former also far more frequently speak of faculty as role models. Aside from this, there are no apparent size-related differences between the larger and smaller institutions' approaches to quality.

Conclusions

During the end of 1981 the issue of Recruitment and Retrenchment was addressed in a separate booklet. In this booklet, the issue of Quality of Education is explored. Taken together, responses to questions raised in connection with these two issues reveal a great deal about the self-perceptions of the college administrators. The responses are mirrors of their pride in their institutions. Pride is evident in references to past history which often spans over 200 years, and in accounts of the professional and social contributions of their graduates. Their definitions of education also reflect

this pride: "Education instructs young people in the inter-relateoness of divisions of knowledge and no less so in the interdependence of human beings."

Determination is also part of the self-image. It is visible in the expressed commitment to attracting and retaining students who are well matched to the acaoemic offerings and environment of the campus. The focus varies:

> "The goal is to prepare young men and women not for specific tasks, but for the challenge to think clearly, to express themselves articulately, and to develop deeply-felt value systems that are rooted in fairness, tolerance, and openness."
>
> "To provide an educational program characterized by balance, comprehensiveness, and relevance. To follow a long tradition of academic excellence within a close personal environment while constantly evolving to meet new needs."

One applicant asks, "Are we flying in the face of reality?" There are many indications that this is a relevant question, but the general tone of the 1981 responses was that of guarded optimism and a commitment to the future.

Appendix A

Content Analysis Procedures

Content analysis provided a systematic and objective method of categorizing responses to these questions. Six steps were used: sampling, establishing preliminary categories, checking reliability, refining the categories, rechecking reliability, and selecting examples.. Analysis was done by three raters.

Quality of Education

The sample for these questions was chosen from the entire group of applications by a Brunswick Foundation executive. The applications were grouped into Category A, colleges with enrollments under 1,000 and Category B, colleges with enrollments from 1,000 to 2,000.

A total of 175 proposals from the applications were used (84 in Category A and 91 in Category B). Categories and themes were established from analysis of the randomly selected sample. "Definitions of quality" were grouped into five categories (see page 15). Responses to "maintaining and improving quality" were also grouped into five categories (see page 22). The small number and clear boundaries of these categories yielded virtually perfect reliability of classification.

Limitations

Conclusions drawn from the content analysis are limited by the retrospective nature of the data and by the characteristics of respondents. The self-selected, purposive sample limits generalizability. Applicants are considerably varied, nevertheless, and appear to be representative of small liberal arts colleges in America.

The open-ended nature of the questions and their short answer format present difficulties for interpreting percentages. Failure to mention a characteristic or practice does not necessarily imply its absence at a give institution. Comparisons across time also raise problems. A practice considered innovative in one year may be taken for granted in another; a practice considered innovative by one institution may be standard practice in another.

Advantages

The limitations of this question format are clearly outweighed by a noteworthy advantage. Like a projective test, these open-ended questions reveal how presidents of small colleges choose to present themselves and their institutions. Replies to the questions were as rich and varied as respondents wished to make them. The analysis preserves that richness and variety.